

GREEN BAY

1600 to 1900



Corinne A. Lester

GREEN BAY

A SHORT HISTORY



by Corinne A. Lester

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On The Cover

"The Spirit of the Northwest," sculpted by Sidney Bedore, stands on the court house lawn in Green Bay. Unveiled in 1931, the group includes Father Claude Allouez, Jesuit missionary; Nicholas Perrot, fur trader; and an Indian brave.

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EUROPEANS COME TO THE NEW LAND

Jean Nicolet, Explorer

Christopher Columbus was the first white man to sail to America. He believed that he was on an island in the Indies near China so he called the native people Indians. When the rulers of Europe heard about this land, they sent men to explore parts of it. France sent explorers up the St. Lawrence River, through the Great Lakes. The lands that they passed through were claimed for France and called New France. The explorers did not find gold and silver as they had hoped. They found a beautiful land "watered by the fairest rivers, full of fish, minerals, furs and timbers of marvelous height."

The fur of the beaver found in the new land proved the most valuable. The white man wanted this fur to make stylish felt hats. The French soon began trading with the Indians for these animal hides. The beaver was hunted and trapped in the north and the furs shipped to

France. Soon the French looked to the Indian tribes further west to fill their orders. This led them to the land around the bay.

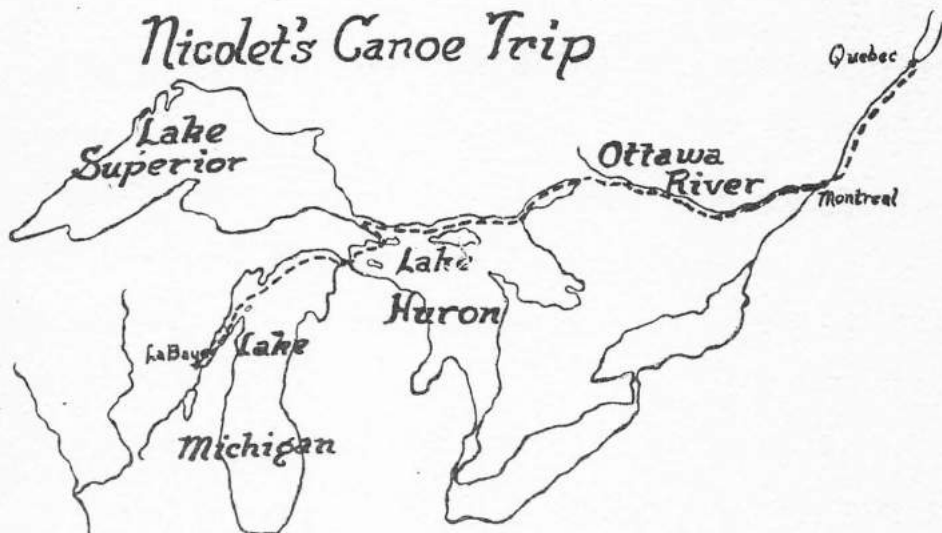
Jean Nicolet was the first white man to explore here. He was chosen by Champlain, the governor of New France*. Nicolet had lived among the Huron Indians in the north and knew their ways and language. These Indians told of a people who lived on the sea and spoke in a strange tongue. Nicolet came to the bay to find these people, hoping they were Chinese. He was searching for China because it was a land of precious metals and rare spices.

Nicolet left the country north of here in July of 1634. He traveled in a large canoe, taking seven Huron Indians with him. They caught fresh fish along the way. These were boiled with the Indian corn and dried meat they had brought along for food. They kept paddling, stopping only to eat and sleep. The men entered Lake Michigan and stayed along the western shore. Their canoes entered the bay and followed the eastern shore until the men caught sight of an Indian village just north of the Fox River.

As Nicolet's canoe approached, the explorer put on a

*see informational note 1

Nicolet's Canoe Trip



brightly colored silk robe embroidered with flowers and birds. He had brought this along to wear should he meet the Chinese. When he stepped ashore he fired two pistols to signal his arrival. The women and children fled at the sight of a man who carried thunder in both hands. They thought for a moment that this was the Great Spirit. The men greeted him warmly and several young Indians helped unload his canoe. Their village was called Red Banks and the Indians were Winnebagoes.

The news of Nicolet's coming spread quickly to the Indian villages around. Soon over four thousand Indians had gathered. Nicolet gave the chiefs beads and

trinkets. Each of the chiefs prepared a feast. At one of these banquets 120 beavers were roasted and eaten. Then came a time for peace talks, and the sharing of the calumet or pipe of peace. After many meetings, a peace treaty was agreed upon. It joined the Winnebagoes, the neighboring Indians, and the French in a promise of friendship.

Nicolet traveled a short way inland but found that this route did not lead to the sea. So he did not stay long before heading back to New France. He told the governor about the land around the bay. He had claimed this land for France even though the Indians had lived here for centuries. He also told the governor about the people with whom he had made friends. These Indian people would bring many valuable furs to the French trading posts.

About ten miles north of our city of Green Bay, on Highway 57, stands a large statue of Nicolet. It was purchased with money donated by school children in 1939. It overlooks Red Banks, the place where Nicolet is said to have stepped ashore.

Nicolas Perrot, Fur Trader

No white man returned to this area for over thirty years. Then in 1667 Nicolas Perrot arrived at Green Bay. Earlier he had worked for the Jesuit missionaries among the eastern Indians. From them he had learned the Algonquian Indian language. The Indians traded furs with Perrot and he paid them with iron tools and weapons. Only from him could they get these useful items. For this reason they looked up to him and called him father.

Beavers were trapped in the cold weather when their furs were thickest. All winter long the Indian family trapped. When spring came they had about fifty pelts to trade. The inside of each pelt was scrapped and rubbed. Then it was trimmed into a rectangular shape. Several of these pelts were sewn together for a robe. Members of the Indian family wore these robes with the fur to the inside. With wear the long hairs fell out, leaving only the soft downy fur. The oils of the Indian's body kept the skins soft. This made the fur worth more to traders.

In 1670 Perrot took a large load of furs to a French trading post in the far north. It took thirty canoes

with many Indians paddling to deliver all the pelts*. Besides the beavers, there were pelts of martin, otter, raccoon, mink, bear, and lynx. The load of furs was covered with oiled skins for protection during stormy weather.

Perrot made friends easily with the Indians. The French government often chose him to keep peace between different tribes. Once a Menomini Indian accidentally killed a Potawatomie Indian while hunting. Angry Potawatomies then tomahawked a Menomini brave. Perrot was sent to talk to the Menomini Chief. He asked him not to start a war with the Potawatomie, which was a very large tribe. The father of the murdered Menomini brave listened to Perrot. He told him that his tribe depended on the French and needed their friendship. Perrot was accepted as a brother to the Menomini as well as other area tribes. It is said that he was the only Frenchman the Fox Tribe liked because he saved the life of the chief's child. Perrot united many Indians against the warring tribes in the East.

The English had settled in the eastern part of America. They started trading with the Indians, giving them

*see informational note 2

more for their pelts. The Frenchmen traded a gun for five beaver pelts. The English required only two pelts. A red blanket, an Indian favorite, was worth two pelts to the French but only one to the English. More and more Indians began trading with the English, keeping the French from getting furs.

Because of this, Perrot gathered the surrounding tribes to make a treaty. The treaty would limit them to trading with the French. He succeeded in getting fourteen different tribes to send their chiefs to the meeting, which took place along the shores of Lake Michigan.



THE MONSTRANCE

Ten years later Perrot was named "Commandant of the West." He camped at the bay along with forty men. It was then that he gave Father Nouvelle, a missionary at the bay, a beautiful silver monstrance. It had his name and that of the priest engraved at the bottom. Father Nouvelle proudly placed it on the altar of his little bay mission. It reminded him of the beautiful

churches in France.

The Indians gradually moved their villages closer to waterways such as the Fox River and the bay. This made it easier for them to take their furs to the French trading posts in their canoes. But as the tribes moved closer to each other they had to compete for the prized beaver skins. The Indians gradually gave up their tribal way of life to work only as hunters and trappers. They became more and more dependent upon the French and English for their useful products.

Claude Allouez, Missionary

Jesuit missionaries came with the fur traders to this new land. They were eager to bring the teachings of their God to the Indians and to serve the Frenchmen already here. One of these early priests was Claude Allouez. He traveled far by canoe and on foot visiting Indian villages along the lakes and rivers. The stars guided him at night. The moss on the trees showed the way through the dense forests.

In the winter of 1671 he arrived at the bay, only to find the water frozen. He raised a sail in his canoe and

skimmed over the icy surface. Here, on the rapids of the Fox River, he and Father Louis Andre built a mission house. They called it St. Francis Xavier. The Indians threw tobacco at it in their way of worship. There is a marker near the eastern end of the present DePere bridge where this mission stood.

Most of the Indians here respected the "blackrobed men". The missionaries helped the Indians in many ways. One of these was to see that they got a fair trade for their furs. They did not like the white traders selling liquor, as it made the Indians rowdy. The missionaries kept accurate written records of all that happened. Much of what is written here is taken from these accounts.

Many Indians were told all about the white man's God. Some of them became Christians, but others did not understand the new beliefs. After a time all the missionaries left this area and many of the Indians went on living in their old ways.

The Fox and some other tribes were not friendly to the French, who had traded with their enemies. The Fox burned the mission house and the nearby storehouse, full of beaver pelts. The beautiful monstrance used on the altar was lost. But 125 years later it was dug up by a

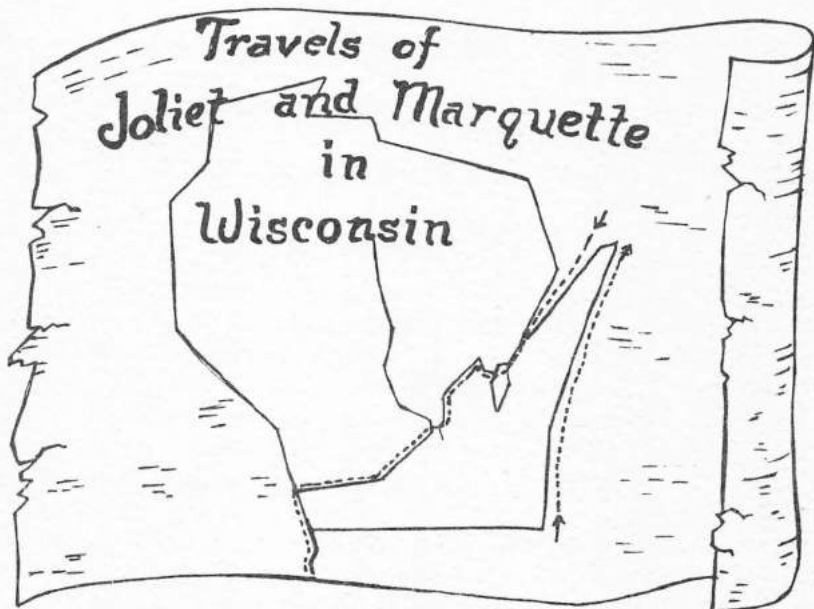
Frenchman building his house. Today it is on display at the Neville Museum.

Father Marquette and Joliet

Louis Joliet, an explorer and fur trader, passed through the waters of the bay in 1673. He had heard Indians telling about a great river flowing southward. He hoped it would lead to the ocean and a shorter route to China. The French governor sent him to explore this river and to draw maps of the lands he saw.

Father Marquette joined Joliet on this trip. He wanted to teach the Christian religion to the Indians living south of the Great Lakes. The two Frenchmen and their Indian guides rested at the mission on the bay before going on.

The exploring party followed the Fox River and crossed Lake Winnebago. They continued on the Fox until they came to a place about a mile from the Wisconsin River. There they portaged their canoes and supplies across the land. The light-weight canoes were easily carried. Once in the Wisconsin River, they paddled their canoes right into the river we call the Mississippi.



Later many other travelers would follow this river highway.

Marquette and Joliet traveled about halfway down the Mississippi. They learned that the Indians farther south were not friendly to the French. They did not want to lose the maps and reports they had drawn up. So they turned and headed back upstream.

It was the hottest part of the summer and they had to paddle against the strong river current. Huge swarms of mosquitoes kept the men from sleeping well at night. Father Marquette became ill. When he got to the mission at the bay he decided to stay and rest.

Joliet went on to report to the governor of New

France. On the way, while shooting the rapids, all his maps and notes were lost. It was lucky that Father Marquette had copies of these records. Here are some of Joliet's notes from that trip:

"I have never, even in France, seen anything more beautiful than the prairies; nothing could be more pleasing than the variety of groves and forests where one may gather plums, pomegranates, lemons, apples, mulberries, and other small fruits not known in Europe. There are quail in the fields and brilliant parrots in the woods. In the rivers one catches wonderful fish. Iron mines and copper, slate, saltpeter, coal, marble, and sandstone are abundant. The buffalo go in herds, some of them 400 in number. Wild turkeys are so common that they are not valued. The Indians raise three crops of maize (corn) a year and refreshing watermelon."

FORTS ARE BUILT AT THE BAY

French Life Around the Fort

Now France claimed all the land drained by the Fox, Wisconsin, and upper Mississippi Rivers. These were promising lands for the fur trader and hunter. Soon Frenchmen came to these waterways and built trading posts nearby. Many of them learned how to get along peacefully with the Indians and shared with them in times of need.

One story tells about an Indian who was traveling alone one cold winter night. He stopped at a settler's cabin and begged to stay the night. He was given blankets for a bed by the kitchen stove. In the morning the settler's wife gave him a good breakfast. A few weeks later he returned with a large quarter of venison for the family.

However, some Frenchmen and some Indians made trouble. Around the year 1703 a French army officer led an expedition of 500 against the warring Fox Indians. To

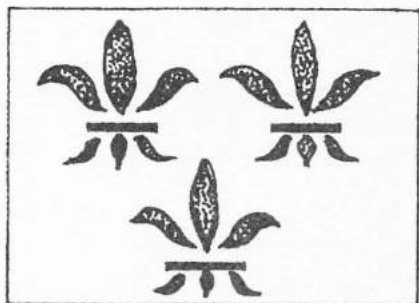
control the waterway and keep it open to trade, the French government decided to build a fort here. It was built on the west side of the Fox River and called Fort LaBaye. This fort was small, only two or three cabins protected by a high picket fence. Once when the Indians were forced to retreat, they destroyed the fort. But it was rebuilt and renamed Fort St. Francis.

After the fort was built more settlers came here to live. Some traders brought their families with them. The women who came here had to have courage and strength. They raised and prepared their own food, sewed their families' clothes, dipped and molded their candles, and made their own soap. Some traders married Indian women, who were used to the work and hardships.

The fort became the center of community life. The officer in charge was called a commandant. When trouble arose between the settlers, he acted as judge and settled the quarrels. Since there were no priests, the commandant performed the marriages. Often people traveled to a mission in the North to have their children baptized. Sundays and church holidays were spent visiting friends and neighbors.

There were no schools here at this time. Only a few

of the adults could read or write. Some of the richer traders sent for a tutor to teach their children. Others sent their sons to school in New France. A very fortu-



FRENCH FLAG UNDER LOUIS XIV

ate young lady might return to France to receive her education. But most of the children had no teacher.

The settlers each owned a long narrow strip of land touching the Fox River and running back two or three miles. They built their homes and storehouses of logs from the forests. These were set upright in the ground or squared and laid lengthwise*. Because wood was the main building material, fire was one of their greatest enemies.

They started farming to raise grain and vegetables for their families. The Indians taught them what they had learned about raising corn. Some settlers had such fine gardens that they sold their extra crops to others,

*see informational note 3

leaving them free to be full-time traders. Soon pigs, horses, cows, and sheep were brought in. Some Indians hunted for the settlers, supplying them with fresh game for their tables.

The settlers also learned to make sugar from the maple trees like the Indians did. Warm sunny days and slightly frosty nights made the sap run upward in the trees. Then in the early spring the families camped out in the maple groves. Men, women, and children were kept busy getting wood for the fire and setting birch-bark buckets under the sticky sap. Women stood over the great shining brass kettles. They stirred the boiling sap with branches of hemlock. They didn't want the foamy syrup to thicken too rapidly or boil over.

The French people did not do any weaving. They wore deerskin clothing unless they could trade for cloth. Some sent for fancy material from Europe for special party dresses.

A blacksmith shod the horses and made the metal tools the people needed. The Indians and Frenchmen brought him their guns and traps for repairing. One of the French settlers that moved in was a canoe builder and another a shoemaker. Dividing up the jobs made life a

little easier for the pioneer settlers.

The French community at LaBaye had grown to about fifty families. They were set apart from the happenings elsewhere in this country, so they became very close to each other. Boxing and wrestling were popular with the men and boys. In the winter the children would wrap up in furs and race over the ice in their sleighs pulled by ponies or dogs. At night the wolves howled on the outskirts of town and the bears made their raids on the sheep. But in the warm cabins the gay Frenchmen and ladies danced lightly to the music of the fiddler.

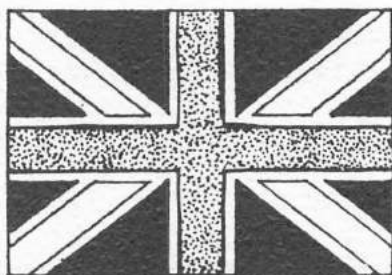
England Takes Control

While the French flag was peacefully floating over Green Bay, England and France were at war. A part of this war took place in the eastern part of America. Both French and English colonists had the help of their faithful Indian friends. They also sent over troops from their home countries in Europe. These battles were called the French and Indian Wars.

The English finally beat the French and a peace

treaty was signed in 1760. It made England the owner of the land which France had claimed. When the news reached Fort St. Francis the French soldiers left. Later the English soldiers arrived and raised their flag over the Fort. Its name was changed to Fort Edward Augustus in honor of the King's brother.

The French people who were living here were given the



BRITISH UNION FLAG

choice of being governed by the English or returning to France. Most of them had become used to the freedom they enjoyed at the bay. They did not care to go back to their more civilized homeland. They decided to stay and accept the new ruler.

Fur trading continued as before with many English traders moving in. They formed partnerships with the more experienced French traders. The French language was still used, and the Indians understood many of the words. So the new English traders learned to speak some French.

They called LaBaye Green Bay because the water and the shore looked green very early in the spring.

The English did not give the Indians presents as freely as the French had. They did not become close friends and seldom married Indians. The lieutenant in charge of the fort tried his best to keep peace with the neighboring tribes. He had to borrow beaded belts from the Indians at the bay to give to the dozens of visiting chiefs. These belts, called wampum, were made from white beads cut from clam shells. They stood for peace and friendship. The lieutenant also offered the Indians ammunition for their guns, flour, and tobacco. To some Indian chiefs he promised medals and other honors. The English trade goods remained cheap and kept the Indian trappers satisfied.

The Indians farther east fought with the English, but the tribes in this area remained peaceful. The English soldiers stayed at the fort here for a few years. Then they left the settlers to protect themselves.

A New Country Is Formed

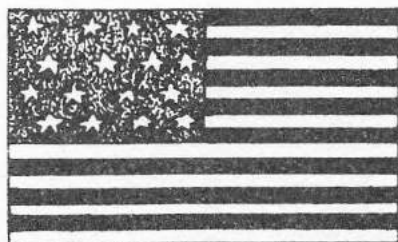
In another part of America, along the eastern shores, the people were not happy under the English government. They wanted to make their own laws and decide for themselves what taxes to pay. They fought a war with their mother country, England. It was called the American Revolution. The commander of the American troops was George Washington.

At the bay the people hardly knew the war was being fought. Later some men from this area joined Washington's army. However, no fighting was done around the bay. The Americans finally won the war. The peace treaty with England gave the land, including the bay area, to the Americans. In 1783, a new country called the United States was formed.

The people at the bay continued trading with the Indians, traveling on the rivers, and raising crops. The English traders did not want to give up their fur business, so they stayed too. They tried to keep the Indians unfriendly to the Americans who wanted to settle here. Another war, the War of 1812, had to be fought.

The English lost again and promised to leave the area.

Communication and transportation were unbelievably slow in those days. The news of the peace treaty did not reach this area until May, 1815. It was in August of 1816 that three large sailing vessels appeared on the



OLD GLORY

bay. These schooners caused great excitement as only small boats had been seen on these waters*.

As the ships drew nearer, hundreds of soldiers were sighted on the decks. They were wearing the blue uniforms of the United States Army. The ships came down the Fox, pulled over to the bank, and about 500 men stepped off. They marched behind their commanding officer, Colonel John Miller. Pitching tents, they set up camp and raised the American flag over it.

The Colonel had orders to build a fort here to protect the settlement. The bay was important as a waterway to the Mississippi. Colonel Miller said they had come

*see informational note 4.

armed for war but that his purpose was peace. The chief looked up and down the shores of the beautiful river where his people had lived for so long. He knew that "where the white man puts his foot, he never takes it up again." But the chief slowly gave his consent to build the fort, asking but one favor- that his French brothers not be disturbed.

The best place for the fort appeared to be the site of the old French and English forts, though not much of these buildings remained. Some soldiers were sent into the surrounding woods to cut trees. They dragged in big logs and these were used to raise the walls. So began Fort Howard, named for an American general in the West.

When completed two months later there were several log barracks, all whitewashed. They faced a parade ground. Here the soldiers marched back and forth to the sound of fife and drum. All around the fort was a stockade fence. The timbers in it were thirty feet high. At the corners were block houses with cannons. The Indians looked at the big guns with wonder and mistrust.

The settlers, on the other hand, soon made friends with the soldiers. The army men protected the settlers' trade and bought their grain and vegetables. Now more

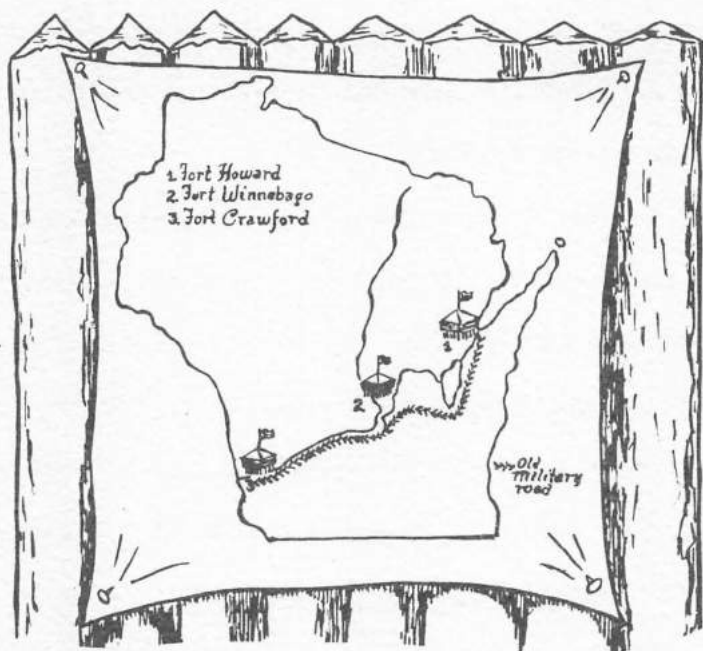
ships and supplies were arriving. The large mess hall in the fort was used for dinners, plays, and dances to which the settlers were invited.

One Christmas, a Colonel McNeil invited one hundred guests to a great feast. He served all kinds of fish from the waters of the bay. There was plenty of venison, bear, porcupine, and other wild meat. After dinner, dancing began and continued until the early hours of the morning. The soldiers' wives wore beautiful dresses from New York. The native girls danced just as gracefully in their broadcloth skirts and deerskin moccasins.

Outside the fort's picket fence was a horse stable and dog kennel. Later a hospital and surgeon's quarters were built away from the barracks to avoid spreading disease. The fort's doctor cared for the health of the settlers as well as that of the soldiers.

One man who lived here, Doctor William Beaumont, became very famous. He did a study of digestion on a wounded French trader named Alexis St. Martin*. Dr. Beaumont also prevented many Indians and settlers from dying of smallpox. He vaccinated all the people, including his wife and daughters, against the disease.

*see informational note 5.



Smallpox, brought to America by the European settlers, spread very quickly and was almost always fatal to the Indians.

In August of 1821 a steamboat arrived. It was the first to enter the upper Great Lakes. It was a side-wheeler named "Walk-in-the-Water". It brought Colonel Pinkey and his troops to take over the fort. A year later this wonder of its time was wrecked on Lake Erie. After this happened the townsfolk were not eager to try this new way of travel. They were content to stay with their proven rowboats and sailboats.

Up to now there had been no public means for crossing .

the Fox River. In June of 1825, a ferryboat began running. It was operated by John Arndt from his home on the east side of the river to a point on the opposite shore. He also opened a village inn. It had been the old de Langlade house and had a large porch overlooking the river. The mistress of this inn made fine breads in her brick oven.

In 1830 the soldiers stationed here were ordered to start a military road. It was planned to connect the three forts built on the Wisconsin Rivers -- Howard on the Fox, Winnebago on the Wisconsin, and Crawford on the Mississippi. The men cut a path through the hardwood timber. In one week they had "twelve miles as straight as an arrow." Another early road followed the old Indian trail along Lake Michigan to Chicago.

A Man Who Lived Under Three Flags

Green Bay is proud of Charles de Langlade. He was called the "Bravest of the Brave" by the Indians and the "Father of Wisconsin" by the settlers. Charles was the son of Augustin de Langlade, a French fur trader, and an

TIME LINE: 1600-1900

Champlain discovers
the Northwest

Pilgrims settle at Plymouth

Nicolet arrives at the

1600

1620

1640



Marquette and Joliet
pass through

1675

1690

The French and Indian War

Fort taken over by the

1750

1770

Grignon

Jo

First church and court house built
Military road built

Astor and Navarino join together

Wisconsin becomes a state
Indians move westward

Green Bay becomes a city

First train comes
Civil War

1825

1840

1860

bay

Perrot comes to the bay

Allouez builds
a mission

1660

1675



French build Fort St. Francis

de Langlades settle
at the bay

1710

1730

1750

English

settles here

Joseph Le Roi builds a cottage

Revolutionary War ends

Porlier settles at the bay

Lawe settles at the bay

Americans build
Fort Howard

Log school built

1790

1810

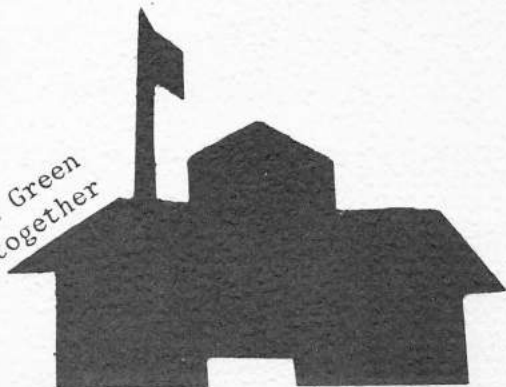
1825

to Green Bay

Fort Howard and Green
Bay join together

1880

1900



Indian woman, the sister of an Ottawa Chief. He had a strong build, black hair, and dark eyes. He was educated by a Jesuit priest.

Charles learned much from his uncle, the Ottawa Chief. The young de Langlade often sat on a bearskin rug in the chief's lodge and listened to tales of the hunt and the warpath. When he was only ten, the Indian chief asked him to go with the tribe to attack their enemies.

The Indians felt Charles was protected by the Great Spirit and would make them successful in battle. The French recognized Charles' bravery and skill and enlisted him in their army. De Langlade and his faithful Indian followers were sent to attack some Indians who were no longer friendly with the French. They killed the entire village.

Charles fought many battles against the English, some say 99 in all. The Indians were always proud of his leadership. The English had a large and well-equipped army. In one battle the redcoats marched with flags flying and drums and bagpipes playing. Charles and his Indians hid behind trees in a deep valley waiting for the English to pass through. On signal, the Indians attacked

and hundreds of English soldiers fell. The others retreated in confusion.

When the French posts were captured by the English, de Langlade and his followers separated. The French troops withdrew down the Fox-Wisconsin waterway. But Charles could not leave his beloved Northwest. He stayed and accepted the change to English rule. During the Revolutionary War, he and his Indians fought against the Americans. The English lost and the Americans took control of this country.

Charles stayed on under the American Government. He became an Indian agent at the bay. He and his father started a trading post. He married a French woman from Quebec and built a house on the east shore of the Fox River. He is said to have been the first permanent white settler here. Just across the river, south of the fort, was the village of the Menomini. This tribe was said to be the most peaceful, brave, and faithful of all that served under Charles' command.

The de Langlades owned 15 acres on which they cleared and cultivated a farm. On it were gardens for food, pasture land for animals, and woods for winter fuel and maple sugar. A log storehouse for keeping furs was built

near the river. In a room connected to their house, they kept many things to trade with the Indians. Charles' wife could not get used to their Indian callers. At first the sight of an Indian blanket in the doorway filled her with fear. However, she soon learned that they had come to trade and not to harm her.

Charles de Langlade died in January of 1800, at the age of 71. He was buried beside his father in the old Catholic cemetery at Green Bay. The Washington Street fire station is on that ground now. A stone marker on the lawn reminds us of its earlier use. De Langlade's English uniform and sword are on display at the Neville Public Museum.

The Building of a Town

Now the bay was no longer a pioneer settlement. The Indians had surrendered almost all their lands. Most tribes were being moved to distant reservations or to the far West. Some tribes fought bitterly to keep their lands*. The soldiers at the fort got Indians and white

*see informational note 6

men together to defend the area. But no battles took place in this village.

Every incoming boat or stagecoach brought new settlers to the bay. Some of these people were from the East and they brought with them the fearful cholera. This disease spread to nearly every household and many died.

In 1821 a log schoolhouse was built. It faced the Indian trail along the river shore. The one room was lighted by a small window. There were no desks but there were benches to sit on. Polite manners were taught as well as reading, writing, grammar, and arithmetic. A teacher from New York was hired and furnished with a house and fuel. She taught 33 children who came from the fort and village. The children were constantly fighting and this first school lasted only a few months. Another school was started and a retired army officer did the teaching.

In 1828 a Catholic church was built on the de Langlade property. Here Father Stephan Badin stayed for two weeks, returning twice a year. Young and old met at the church. There, seated on the floor, they would learn the catechism. In 1829, Christ Church was established, the

first Protestant church in the area.

A small newspaper was printed twice each month. In 1834 it published this news:

"Three times a week without fail
At four o'clock we look for the mail,
Brought with dispatch on an Indian trail."

The government ordered the sale of the military base in 1863. That same year the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad came to Green Bay. The land where old Fort Howard stood was used for the depot and train grounds. There is a bronze marker near one depot on the site of that early fort. The fort was torn down piece by piece. Two of the early buildings, the hospital and officer's quarters, were removed. They can be seen today at Heritage Hill State Park. Across the river from this park is the National Railroad Museum. Here many old steam locomotives are on exhibit.

EARLY LEADERS OF GREEN BAY

It took many people with courage and a spirit of adventure to live in this wilderness. These people and their children built the village at the bay into the city of Green Bay. Their stories are the final chapters of this book.

Pierre Grignon

Pierre Grignon arrived at the bay in 1773. He came down from Canada, as did the Frenchmen who followed him. Pierre looked after Charles de Langlade's farming interests, becoming a good friend of Charles. He married de Langlade's daughter and built his home nearby. His living room was decorated with beautiful carved woodwork which was shipped in from a great distance. His fire-

place was big enough to burn huge oak logs. Pierre operated a trading post near his home on the river*. In the fall his door was always open to traders passing by on their way to Indian camps. He would invite them in to a generous banquet complete with wine and song. Then they would exchange stories of adventure in the wild. One young trader, weary of the winter loneliness, walked one hundred miles on snowshoes to spend a week at the bay.

Later the Grignons built a mill to grind wheat and corn for the settlers. During the 1830's Pierre's grandson carried mail from Green Bay to Milwaukee. He rode an Indian pony when the roads were passable. In the winter he walked the whole route on snowshoes. When tired, he would wrap himself up in his blanket and lay down in a snow bank. He carried two pistols for protection from robbers or wild animals.

Jacques Porlier

In 1791, Jacques Porlier came to LaBaye, as it was called in French. At first he worked as a clerk in Pierre Grignon's trading post. Later he traded with the Indians directly. Many of his winters were spent away on

*see informational note 7

trips searching for Indian fur trappers.

Jacques married an Indian woman and bought a house on the west side of the Fox River. It had been built in 1776 by a fur trader named Joseph Roi. It was well-constructed with heavy beams and thick boards and still stands today- the oldest house in Wisconsin*. In this house, Porlier tutored the Grignon children in his native French language.

Jacques was well-educated and had a beautiful handwriting. He helped his neighbors with their legal papers free of charge and many asked for his advice. Later he became Chief Justice of the county court. Porlier had a daughter and a son who grew up here. Later they were sent to live with an aunt in Montreal. It was important to Porlier that they become educated in a good school in Canada, as there were none here.

John Lawe

John Lawe came here at the age of 16 with his uncle. It was in 1797 that they opened a blacksmith shop. When his uncle returned to Canada, he left his property to his nephew. John had lived with his uncle long enough to

*see informational note 8



learn to trade with the Indians. He became a well-known fur trader. He was hired as an agent for John Astor's American Fur Company.

John built his house where he could keep an eye on the Fox River. He made sure that the canoes bringing his furs would not be captured by another trader. Every spring fleets of canoes would arrive loaded with pelts of beaver, mink, and fox. John kept an account for each

Indian who traded with him. He would sometimes give an Indian more winter supplies than he had coming, and the Indian would pay him back the next year. At that time the Indian trapper would bring back more than the value of his supplies to pay back his credit. John Lawe often fed and cared for old Indians who had been left behind and were unable to provide for themselves.

Lawe served as county judge from 1824 to 1832. The site of Wisconsin's first court house is on the river at Heritage Hill. A log cabin like the one that once stood there can be seen.

John Jacob Astor

As the fur business became more important, large fur companies were formed. One of these was the American Fur Company. It set up trading posts all along the Great Lakes and the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. The head of this company was John Jacob Astor.

In 1835 Astor took over some French traders' lands along the east banks of the Fox River. He named this property Astor, after himself. Here he had his agents construct several buildings. One of these, the Astor

House, was advertised as the largest hotel west of New York. Inside stood beautiful mahogany furniture shipped from New York. Astor attracted settlers to this area and sold them pieces of his property. He built the first bank in Wisconsin here. It had a thick stone vault to keep the money safe.

Daniel Whitney

Daniel Whitney came here from the East in the summer of 1819. Some of the trip was made by boat but most was made on foot. He carried his belongings with him. He had heard that the soldiers here had brought their families and decided that this area was a good place to trade. So he built the first real store here, two miles south of Green Bay on the east side of the Fox River. This area was known as Camp Smith. His store had a fine selection of goods for the ladies such as needles, thread, calico, pots and pans, plus dozens of other extra things that they had gone without. Soldiers, fur traders and woodsmen gathered around the store's pot-bellied stove to exchange news and tell stories.

Whitney was an explorer at heart. He made many

trips down the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers looking for good trading locations. He also became interested in the cutting and selling of timber in the North. When out in the wilderness, Daniel often risked his life, but would never ask a fellow traveler to chance anything he would not do himself. Once he had to cross a frozen river in the early spring. The ice was beginning to melt. Fearing the fast-moving water below, his Indian guide refused to follow him. Whitney told the Indian to lie down. He took a rope from his sled and tied it around the Indian's feet, dragging him safely across the ice.

After living near Camp Smith awhile, Whitney decided to buy some land to build a town. He chose the land on the east side of the mouth of the Fox River, with a smaller river called the Devil River running through it. Though swampy, it was well-located, for supplies could easily be brought in by water. He took his store apart, loaded it on sleds, and dragged it over two miles up the ice-covered river to his newly-purchased land.

Whitney built a pier for boats to dock at while loading or unloading. Next a log road was laid over the swampy land all the way back to the Devil River. He used oxen to pull out the stumps and level the ground. This

road is now Main Street in Green Bay and the Devil River is called the East River. That same year Whitney built a sawmill, a warehouse, and a schoolhouse. He called his town Navarino.

A hotel was built on the river across from the fort and was called the Washington House*. It was a favorite meeting place for the soldiers from the fort and the men from the village. There had been a Sac Indian village on that site. In 1733 the Sacs killed the French commandant and the French soldiers wiped out their village, killing many of the inhabitants.

As fast as he could get materials, Whitney built more stores and houses. When new settlers arrived on steamboats or sailing ships, Whitney would rent them a house. One of the first men to build his own house in Navarino was Henry S. Baird, a lawyer. He later became mayor of this town. His little law office, built in 1831, has been moved to Heritage Hill State Park.

Morgan L. Martin

At first the people of Astor and Navarino were jea-

*see informational note 9

lous of each other. But in 1838 they decided to unite into one settlement. They chose the name of Green Bay. Morgan L. Martin was elected their first town president.

Mr. Martin, a lawyer, was important in getting Wisconsin to become a state*. He was one of the men who helped draw up the state constitution and helped to form our state government. Later he served in the United States Congress.

Under Martin's leadership, a canal was built connecting the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. This made it possible for larger boats to sail from the Mississippi River all the way to Green Bay. The arrival of a schooner was a big event. To some it brought friends, to others supplies and mail, and to all the latest news.

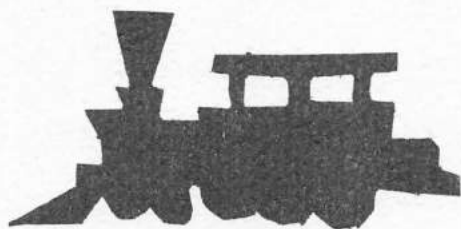
Morgan Martin built a beautiful home called Hazelwood on the Fox River. The home is now owned by the museum and is on its original site, now South Monroe Avenue. In the dining room is the drop leaf table on which the state constitution was written.

James Henry Elmore

Andrew Elmore helped to bring the Chicago and North-

*see informational note 10

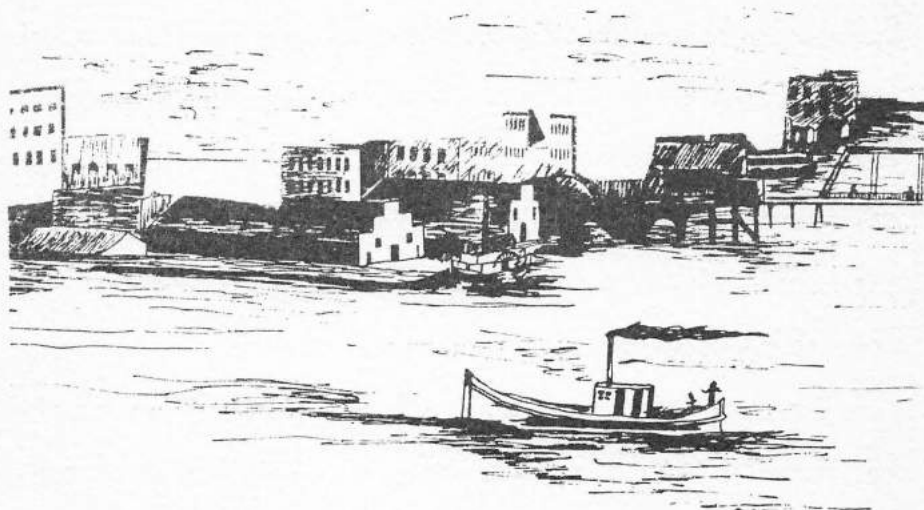
Western railroad to Green Bay. The railroad made the area grow in size and importance. The Elmores lived on the west side of the Fox River, called Fort Howard. Andrew's son , James, was the leader of this town.



In 1895 the town of Fort Howard united with the town of Green Bay on the east side of the river. They became the City of Green Bay. Bands on both sides of the river joined in the celebration. Bells rang and mill whistles blew. The cannon at the foot of Pine Street was shot off. James Elmore was chosen as the city's first mayor. He remained in this office for many years. In 1912 he became the postmaster of Green Bay.

Under James Elmore's leadership muddy streets were paved with cedar blocks and dirt sidewalks were replaced with wooden ones. Several miles of sewers were put in to drain off the water. The Main and Mason Street bridges were repaired, and a third bridge was built at Walnut Street. A paid fire department with the latest

equipment was started. Even a fine new high school was built. Green Bay, once a fur trading post, was well on its way to becoming a modern city.



A CHANGE FOR THE INDIAN

The Indian trade depended on keeping the wilderness country for hunting and trapping wild animals. But to this land came woodsmen and farmers, miners and shippers, city builders and manufacturers. They felt the time had come to make the land fill their needs.

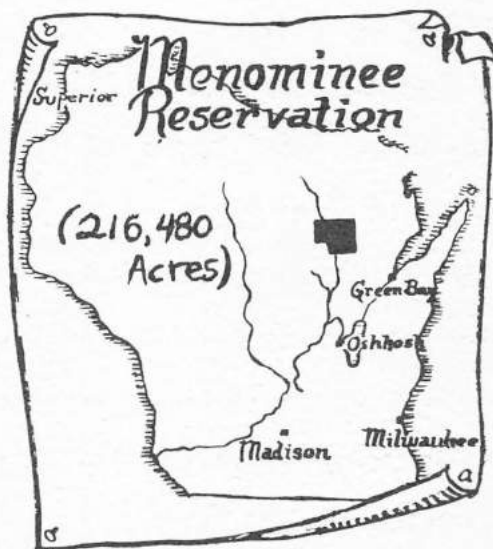
The New York Indians were being forced out by the white settlers in the East. They began moving in on Menomoni land. Eleazer Williams, a missionary, started the movement by leading his band of Oneida and Stockbridge Indians to Green Bay*. A treaty was arranged whereby the Menomoni allowed these Indians to live on a small piece of land along the Fox River. They received \$1500 in goods for this. The next year other New York tribes followed.

In August of 1827 the United States and the Menomnies signed a treaty at Little Butte de Morts. The Menomoni gave the United States the land between Lake Michigan and Lake Winnebago, from Milwaukee north to

*see informational note 11

Green Bay. The Indians were paid \$6000 a year for twelve years. They were also paid \$20,000 to set aside half a million acres on the west side of the Fox River for the New York tribes.

The government had tried to "wean the Indians from



their wandering habits." They were given clothing and looms and spinning wheels as well as flour. They were also given farming tools and seeds and were encouraged to till the land. Some got hogs and cattle to raise. Blacksmith equipment and a grist and sawmill were set up. A school was started for the Menominee children. The Indians did not take to farming and their young were happier living in the wild than learning geography.

In 1836 a second treaty-making meeting was demanded. This one took place at the Cedars on the lower Fox River*. The Menominies consented to sell all their land as far west as the Wolf River, four million acres in all. They were to be paid \$20,000 a year for 20 years. This came to about 17 cents an acre.

Slowly but surely the Menominies were being forced out of their homeland. Their leader, Chief Oshkosh*, was a man of peace. He refused to go on the warpath against the white settlers as so many other tribes had.

In 1848 Wisconsin became the 30th state in the Union. That same year another treaty-making meeting was called. The government had made a ruling that all Indians must move west of the Mississippi River. The Menominies were given lands in Minnesota and were told to move there.

Chief Oshkosh visited the new lands and returned to Wisconsin. "The Crow Wing Country is not suitable for the needs of my people," he said. He met with the President of the United States and told him, "My tribe is small and we want to live in peace for the little time remaining to us." President Filmore gave the tribe until

*see informational note 12

*see informational note 13

June of 1851 to move.

The time passed and still the Menominies did not move. Finally, in 1854, they were ordered to move northward. A fair-sized timber reservation on the Wolf River was set aside for them. It is here that many of them still live today. They are the only Indians east of the Mississippi to live on part of the land that belonged to their forefathers. Now they must make their living in the white man's civilization without losing all the colorful patterns of their Indian culture and tradition.

INFORMATIONAL NOTES

1. French Exploration in America: The first Frenchman, Jacques Cartier, was sent to North America by the King of France in 1534. He came in search of lands to add to the French possessions and to discover a new route to China. He made two more trips in 1535 and 1541. Each time he traveled up the river he named the St. Lawrence. Cartier claimed possession of the country for France (as far as the present city of Montreal).

In 1603, Samuel de Champlain went to Canada and explored the St. Lawrence River. He established the city of Quebec. He later returned to become lieutenant governor of New France. Champlain won the lasting friendship of the Algonquian speaking Indians by helping them fight the Iroquois Tribes. He started a fur trading business as well as the first strong French settlements in America.

2. Types of Canoes: Several types of canoes were used, depending on where they were going and what they had to carry. The smallest was the 15-foot Indian canoe, made of birch bark and sealed with pine pitch. The largest was the 36-foot Montreal canoe, manned by a crew of twelve men. Like the smaller one it was made from materials found in the woods and could be easily carried around falls and rapids or between waterways. Sometimes when reaching the rapids, the men would get out and climb the bank, leaving the canoe in the water. They would then walk around the fall, pulling the boat up through the foaming waters with a long rope.

3. Building a Log Cabin: The log cabin was not easy to build although it required few tools. Logs about the same size were gathered. They could be left round or squared off. Notches were cut near the ends where the logs fit together. Then the logs were laid one upon another until the walls reached the right height. Between the logs small bits of wood were driven, quite near together. The cracks between them were filled with clay or mud. They usually covered the cabin roof with

bark and later with rough wooden shingles cut from logs.

Most log cabins did not have windows because few people could afford glass panes. Settlers often covered openings with greased paper or animal skins. They made doors and floors with logs split lengthwise. The door was hung on leather hinges.

The chimney was formed of four poles of the proper length, interlaced with small branches. Clay and water were mixed with hay, and this thick mixture was used to fill in the frame. While still wet, pot hooks were set in and the whole chimney was covered with a smooth coating of clay. Some chimneys were made of fieldstone with clay between them.

Most cabins had one story, with one or two rooms. Some had a loft for sleeping and storage, which could be reached with a ladder. Later pioneers erected two-story log houses with steps and several rooms.

4. The Bateau (ba tō'): The bateau was the boat seen most often on these waters. It was about 30 feet long and had a flat bottom with tapering ends. It held a crew of six rowers, one steersman and a commander who worked for the fur company. The furs it carried were placed in the center and covered to protect them from the rain. Also in the center was a mess basket filled with food and two tents for camping at night. It was the custom of the French boatmen to sing merry songs together to cheer them as they rowed. On open waters a sail was raised which saved the crew the labor of rowing. These boats were kept within easy reach of shore in case of a sudden storm.

5. Dr. Beaumont's Digestion Study: Dr. Beaumont came to Fort Howard in 1826, as the post surgeon. Before this he had been at a trading post, when a French trapper, Alexis St. Martin, was accidentally shot. He dressed the trapper's stomach wound and made him promise to return to be checked. The hole in Alexis' stomach healed but never closed. The doctor could look directly into the cavity of the stomach when Alexis would lay on his side. He lowered different foods by a cord into his stomach. He noted just how long the gastric juices took to digest them. Later he wrote a book about the digestion process which was used in teaching new doctors. Many of Dr. Beaumont's medical books and records are in a room at the

Fort Howard Hospital.

6. Indian Tribes: The Sauk and Fox Indians, under the leadership of Black Hawk, refused to leave their lands. At the "Battle of Bad Axe" on the Mississippi River many were killed.

The Winnebago, under Red Bird, also defied the white man's ways. They guarded the waterways and gave the traders trouble.

7. Early Trading Posts: The first trading posts took furs in exchange for goods. Great scales, hung from heavy iron chains, were used to weigh the peltry packs. Favorite Indian items were hard metal objects such as guns, arrow heads, hatchets, knives, traps, and kettles, as well as gun-powder. Indians also liked silver jewelry, glass beads, ivory, tin looking-glasses, combs, little bells, cloth, and coats or shirts. Besides beaver furs the trappers brought otter, martin, mink, fox, wolf, bear, wildcat, muskrat, and smoked deerskin. Some Indians brought maple sugar, Indian corn and beans, or wild rice. The squaws offered handmade items such as leather moccasins and hunting pouches, little boxes of birch bark embroidered with porcupine quills, or woven mats. They also made small toy models of Indian cradles, snowshoes, canoes, and wigwams. The Neville Museum has some trading post articles on display.

Later trading posts carried items for the white settlers living here, such as materials and thread, groceries, household utensils, and farming tools. Toward the rear of the room were barrels of rum and whiskey.

8. Roi-Portier-Tank Cottage: This cottage is named after its three owners. The last owner, Niels Otto Tank, bought the house in 1850 along with several hundred acres of land. He added two wings to the house, one for a dining room and the other for a prayer room. His wife sent to Holland, her native country, for the home's furnishings. Mr. Tank was a wealthy missionary and hoped to start a religious colony for Norwegian immigrants. He offered them free use of the land if they would work together for a common cause. But quarrels developed and most of the people left to follow a man named Iverson. They started the colony of Ephraim in Door County in 1853.

When the Tanks died, the home's beautiful furnishings were sold. The city later took ownership of the cottage, and moved it to a park dedicated to Mr. Tank by his wife. The Green Bay Historical Society was able to find and buy back many of its original furnishings. This historic cottage can now be seen facing the Fox River at the foot of Heritage Hill.

9. Washington House: It was in 1833 that the Washington House was built. On this same site in 1862 Dr. Beaumont's son, Israel, built and operated a hotel called the Beaumont House. This was later rebuilt with some of the old bricks and called the Beaumont Hotel, and rebuilt again in 1963, as the Beaumont Inn. It has since changed its name to the Beaumont Ramada Inn, and that corner is now named Washington and Main Street.

10. Formation of Wisconsin: The United States, in the ordinance of 1787, provided for the annexation of the Northwest Territory which included Wisconsin. In 1836 Congress passed a bill creating the territory of Wisconsin. It included parts of present-day Minnesota, Iowa, and North and South Dakota. The name suggested for our state by Judge James Doty was also the name of the principal river here. "Quisconsin" is Indian and means "gathering of the waters". Henry S. Baird was appointed the first attorney general of the territory by Governor Henry Dodge.

In 1838 the Iowa Territory was created and Wisconsin's western boundary then became the Mississippi River. It still included about a third of the present state of Minnesota. Wisconsin joined the Union as the 30th state on May 29, 1848. Its boundaries were set as they are today.

11. Eleazer Williams: Eleazer is believed to have been part Indian and part white. He was raised by white relatives in New England. Educated as a missionary, he dedicated his life to working with the Indians. He spoke the Mohawk language well and preached the gospel to his Indian converts.

In 1832 he brought some New York Indians here. He married a pretty young Indian girl and lived near the mouth of the Fox River. The remains of his home are on a hill overlooking the river. His picture and some of his

belongings can be seen at the Neville Museum.

Williams wanted to form a Christian Indian community with himself as the leader. However, quarrels with some of the Indian tribes kept his plan from working.

About 1850 he read a story about the "Lost Dauphin" of France, whom everyone had thought to be dead. Eleazer announced that he was really the prince, son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. He claimed that the son of the King of France had come to see him so he would sign away his rights to the throne. He even showed scars matching those the young prince had borne. All this talk brought him some publicity but it soon died down.

12. Indian Treaty: Treaty meetings could last many days so those who came prepared to stay. Over 3,000 Menomini arrived with their families. The braves dressed in their beaded buckskin with gaudy blankets hanging loosely from their waist. Some of them carried firearms. Their supplies were packed on small ponies or carried by the squaws, some of whom also carried papooses. A village of matted lodges sprang up overnight.

When the lengthy talks had ended and the terms were agreed to, the pipe of peace was smoked. The meeting was ended with a powwow. The Indians formed a circle with a little band of white men in the inner ring. The hollow place in the center was filled with dancers, drummers, and singers. The drums were made from hollow logs over which wet deerskin had been stretched. While the drums were beaten, some Indians blew reed pipes. The braves on the outside of the circle were daubed with paint of every color and had two to twenty feathers stuck upright in their hair.

13. Chief Oshkosh: Chief Oshkosh stood trial before Judge James Doty in the Brown County Courthouse here in 1830. The Chief and two tribesmen had hacked another Indian to death on the Fox River right here in Green Bay. That Indian was killed in revenge for mistakenly shooting a Menomini hunter. The jury brought in a verdict of guilty for Chief Oshkosh. Henry Baird was prosecuting attorney. But Judge Doty held that the white man's laws did not govern the relations of Indian to Indian, and he freed the Chief. Doty felt it "unjust to declare the Indian an offender against rules he could not have known." A painting of the famous trial hangs in the courtroom in our capitol building in Madison.

The Wilderness Is Tamed

The axe has cut the forest down,
The laboring ox has smoothed all clear,
Apples now grow where pine trees stood,
And slow cows graze instead of deer.

Where Indian fires once raised their smoke
The chimneys of a farmhouse stand,
And cocks crow barnyard challenges
To dawns that once saw savage land.

The axe, the plow, the binding wall,
By these the wilderness is tamed,
By these the white man's will is wrought,
The rivers bridged, the new towns named.

Elizabeth Coatsworth
Macmillan Publishing Company
1962
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